



Melissa Kwasny, a poet from Jefferson City, has published four books of poetry, two novels, and edited two anthologies. She has taught poetry in public schools, in colleges, and to teachers as an instructor in a graduate program. Melissa holds an MFA in Poetry, an MA in Literature and a BA in English, all from UM Missoula.

The review panel was “knocked out” by Melissa’s work. They felt that she is a “strong and careful writer who produces beautiful work.” And they felt they learned something new when reading her work – she strives, and succeeds, to teach the reader.

Melissa says, “I believe in the Imaginary Life of the Interior and in protecting and promoting that life for others, especially in a time of increasing materialism and instrumentalism. All this is my contribution to the enterprise of poetry.”

About her writings, Melissa says, “All four of my books of poetry, including *Thistle*, and *The Archival Birds*, as well as the two novels, are explorations of and investigations into similar questions: How do we have a relationship with the natural world in our time? What can we learn about being human from the non-human forms of life? What part does language play in this search and what part the various mythologies of both Western and Native cultures? My poems have always focused on the image, in particular the natural image, and my ability to render it has brought me increasingly closer to those forms of being other than the human, and, in turn, my poetic form has become looser and less conventional.”